



## PRESS RELEASE

**For Immediate Release**  
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### **Dry Weather Prompts Inflation of Rubber Dam**

***Water Supply Delivery Not Impacted; Fishermen, Boaters Must Portage Around Dam***

Santa Rosa, CA – The Sonoma County Water Agency (Agency) is currently informing the public about its plans to raise its inflatable rubber dam on the Russian River on Monday, January 22. Due to a lack of rain and a consistent demand for water since early fall, lower water levels in Agency wells have reduced water production capacity. Raising the inflatable dam will increase the Agency's ability to meet the water supply demand of its water transmission system customers. The dam will remain inflated until the Russian River flow reaches 1,000 cfs. The Russian River flow is currently only 500 cfs.

The inflatable dam will be fully inflated to an elevation of thirty-eight feet. Raising the dam means steelhead fishermen will not be able to run drift boats past the inflatable dam. Fishermen and boaters will instead have to portage their boats around the inflatable dam or use the public fishing access on the west side of Wohler Bridge. California Department of Fish and Game regulations prohibit fishing within 250 feet of the upstream and downstream side of the dam. No other recreational impacts are expected.

"We are currently experiencing water conditions similar to those in the summer time," said Pam Jeane, deputy chief engineer. "Lower water levels in our wells have resulted in reduced water production capacity."

Over the past month the Agency has been closely monitoring declining water levels in its wells. As a result of the declining water levels, the Agency has reduced the amount of time it operates its pumps that move water into its distribution system. A reduction in pumping directly impacts the Agency's ability to meet customer demands.

"Although water demand is lower now than it is in the summer, we are beginning to feel a pinch due to the reduced time we may operate our pumps," said Jeane. "We are still meeting our water supply demands and service will remain uninterrupted."

Residents are also encouraged to conserve water during the winter by reducing their outdoor watering. Water conservation tips can be found on the Agency's website at [www.sonomacountywater.org](http://www.sonomacountywater.org).

The inflatable dam is located just down stream of the Wohler Bridge on the Russian River. The inflatable dam is normally raised in the spring when potable water demand increases. The inflatable dam raises the water level and creates a small lake from which to draw water into the off-stream infiltration ponds. This lake also enhances Agency well levels in the area. Permanent fish ladders provide fish passage when the inflatable dam is raised.

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*The Sonoma County Water Agency provides water supply, flood protection and sanitation services for portions of Sonoma and Marin counties. Visit us on the Web at [www.sonomacountywater.org](http://www.sonomacountywater.org).*